
Growing WILD

Spring 1997

Utah's Project WILD Newsletter

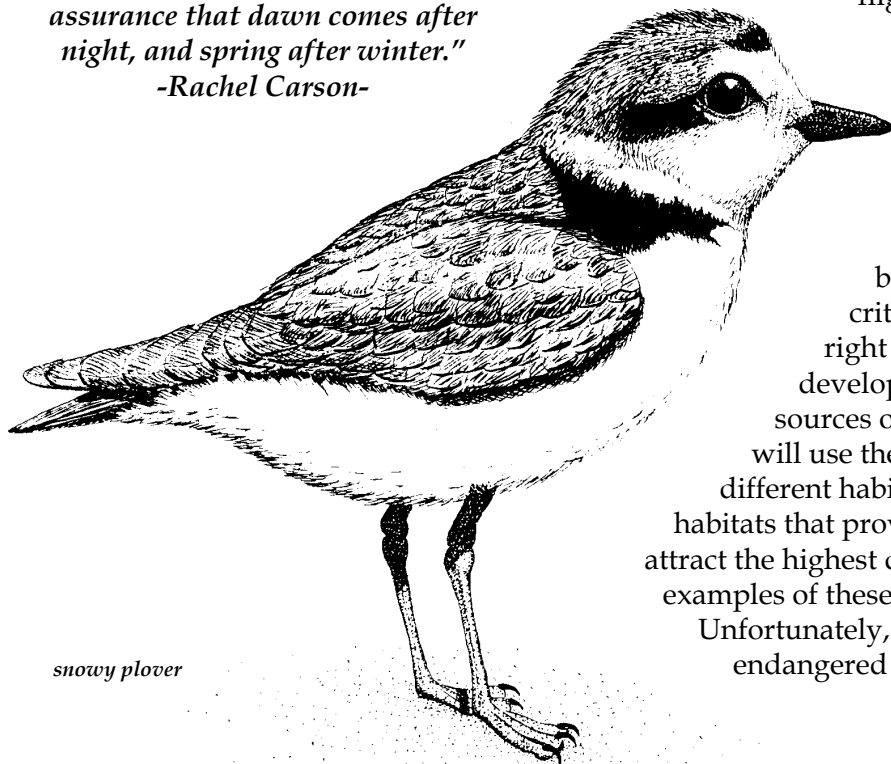


Utah's Frequent Flyers: They're Back!

Migration is a dangerous undertaking; about half of the birds that begin a migratory journey succumb to starvation, predation, exhaustion, storms or collisions. Why then would so many species of birds migrate? The migratory habit of birds allows them to exploit abundant food resources during the summer and avoid limited food resources during the winter. The advantages of following the food so outweigh the perils of migration that bird migration is the rule, not the exception, in most of the world.

Although most species of North American birds migrate, they use many different migration strategies. Some travel in small family groups, while others travel in huge mixed-species flocks. Some species migrate from Canada and Alaska to Utah for the winter. Other species simply stop-over in Utah and can only be seen here during migration. Of course, many birds that nest in Utah also migrate, some from the mountain slopes to the valley floors (elevational migrants), others from Utah to more southern states like Arizona and New Mexico (short-distance migrants), and many from Utah to Mexico, Central America or even South America (neotropical migrants).

*"There is something infinitely healing
in the repeated refrains of nature - the
assurance that dawn comes after
night, and spring after winter."
-Rachel Carson-*



snowy plover

Migration takes an incredible amount of energy, and birds have developed different strategies to cope with these energy demands. Some birds make short flights from one area to the next, fueling up at each site as they go. Other species spend several months in a single area building up fat reserves, then make a non-stop journey (some up to several thousand miles) to their wintering grounds.

While these migration strategies appear to be very different, they all depend on one critical factor--having the proper habitat in the right place at the right time. Most birds have developed migration patterns based on reliable sources of food, cover and water (i.e., habitat) and will use these flyways year after year. While many different habitats are used during migration, those habitats that provide food, cover and water in the same place attract the highest diversity and number of birds. The best examples of these are lowland riparian and wetland habitats. Unfortunately, these are also two of the rarest and most endangered habitat types in western North America.

(continued on page 2.)

Utah's Frequent Flyers (continued)

Wetlands make up only about 1.5% of the total land area of Utah. And, almost three-fourths of our wetlands can be found in one place--the shores of the Great Salt Lake. Not surprisingly, the Great Salt Lake is one of the western hemisphere's most critical migratory bird staging areas. Literally millions of waterfowl and shorebirds use the Great Salt Lake as a migratory fueling station.

Most migrants are adapted to the natural fluctuations of critical areas, like the 1980's floods of the Great Salt Lake. However, permanent losses of wetlands (Utah has lost nearly one-third of its wetlands over the last 150 years) result in long-term declines of migratory birds.

Riparian habitats are extremely rare, making up less than one percent of the total land cover of the state. They are used by three-fourths of all Utah birds species during some part of their lives. This is about 270 species! Throngs of migratory songbirds use riparian zones during spring and fall; some stay to nest and raise their families and others seek shelter in riparian areas from the harsh Utah winters. Unfortunately, we have lost between 70 and 90 percent of our riparian areas in the last 150 years. Many human activities continue to threaten riparian areas: recreation, urban development, agricultural encroachment, overgrazing, water development and wood cutting.

While the Great Salt Lake obviously represents a critical migration area, it is more difficult to identify critical riparian areas. Because so many species use low elevation riparian habitats (higher elevation habitats are usually under the grip of winter during the migration periods), and because these areas are so rare and threatened, it is safe to say that all of Utah's remaining lowland riparian areas are critical migration links.

The best way to keep from losing wetland and riparian habitat is to conserve what we have. However, in areas where the habitat is destroyed or severely altered, habitat restoration is the key. Restoration may be as simple as planting trees, shrubs and cattails with a little cleanup or as complex as extensive environmental engineering with restoration of water to dry streambeds and wetland basins.

Providing migratory bird habitat can start in your own school yard or neighborhood. This doesn't mean you have to dig a wetland in the playground; you can plant trees and shrubs that provide birds with food and cover during migration and throughout the year (you can get a copy of *Creating Landscapes for Wildlife...* a guide for backyards in Utah through Project WILD). In addition to providing bird habitat, these areas make great outdoor classrooms! Another way to help is to write letters to your local land management agencies and newspapers letting them know about your concerns for Utah's birds. *by Frank Howe - UDWR Nongame Avian Coordinator*

In this issue of *Growing WILD* we are celebrating the return of spring and migratory songbirds. Share this annual event with your students by using migratory birds as a thematic unit to explore science, social sciences, foreign languages, math and other subjects. Project WILD has many resources available to help you, including our Migratory Blues Box, a treasure of teaching resources.

Snowy Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus



The snowy plover is an uncommon summer resident in northern Utah. This six inch plover inhabits one of the most hostile environments in Utah: the barren playas and salt flats of the Great Basin desert.

Nesting in May, with no vegetation to shield it from the scorching sun and no drinkable water available, the plover digs a shallow nest scrape where the male and female take turns incubating the eggs. Snowy plovers will shade the eggs from the intense sun by standing over the eggs when the air temperature exceeds 106½°F and sometimes wet their breast feathers which cools the eggs. Amazingly, this plover gets almost all of its drinking water from eating insects!

Utah's snowy plovers winter along the Pacific coast anywhere from Oregon to Costa Rica. In Mexico, snowy plovers are called Chorlito Aleandrino.

Where do they come from and what are they called?

Listed below are just a few of the species of migratory birds that visit Utah. Their winter range is also listed, as well as one of the many names that the bird might have within that range. What can your students add to this list?

American Name

Winter Residence

Foreign Name

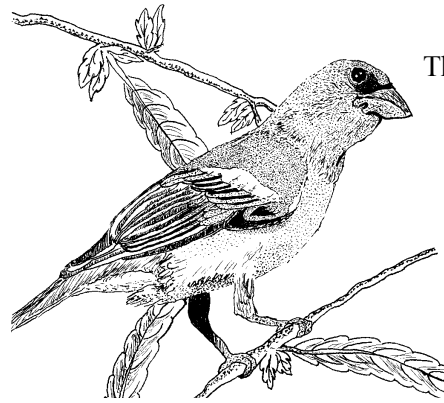


White-faced Ibis	Mexico, Central America and South America	Ibis Cara Blanca
Sandhill Crane	Mexico	Grulla Gris
Turkey Vulture	Mexico, Central America and South America	Zopilote Cabecirrojo
Ferruginous Hawk	Mexico	Aguililla Real
Common Black Hawk	Mexico, Central America and South America	Aguililla Negra Menor
Peregrine Falcon	Mexico, Central America and South America	Falcon Peregrino
Long-billed Curlew	Mexico and Central America	Zarapito Piquilargo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Mexico, Central America and South America	Cucillo Alirrojo
Burrowing Owl	Mexico, Central America and South America	Tecolote Zancon
White-throated Swift	Mexico and Central America	Vencejito Pechiblanco
Broad-billed Hummingbird	Mexico and Central America	Colibri Latirrosto
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Mexico and Central America	Papamoscas Gorjicenzo
Western Kingbird	Mexico and Central America	Tirano Palido
Horned Lark	Mexico, Central America and South America	Alondra Cornada
Barn Swallow	Mexico, Central America and South America	Golondrina Tijereta
House Wren	Mexico, Central America and South America	Troglodita Continental
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Mexico and Central America	Reyezuelo Sencillo
Mountain Bluebird	Mexico and Central America	Azulejo Palido
Loggerhead Shrike	Mexico	Verdugo Americano
Gray Vireo	Mexico	Vireo Gris
Solitary Vireo	Mexico and Central America	Vireo Anteojo
Virginia's Warbler	Mexico	Chipe de Virginia
Yellow Warbler	Mexico, Central America and South America	Chipe Amarillo Norteno
MacGillivray's Warbler	Mexico and Central America	Chipe Cabecigris de Tolmie
Common Yellowthroat	Mexico, Central America and South America	Mascarita Nortena
Wilson's Warbler	Mexico and Central America	Chipe Coroninegro
Yellow-breasted Chat	Mexico and Central America	Chipe Piquigruoso
Western Tanager	Mexico and Central America	Tanagra Cabeciroja
Blue Grosbeak	Mexico and Central America	Picogruoso Azul
Lazuli Bunting	Mexico	Colorin Aliblanco
Black-chinned Sparrow	Mexico	Gorrion Indefinido
Red-winged Blackbird	Mexico and Central America	Tordo Sargento
Western Meadowlark	Mexico	Pradero Gorjeador
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Mexico	Tordo Cabeciamarillo
Brown-headed Cowbird	Mexico	Tordo Cabecicafe
Northern Oriole	Mexico, Central America and South America	Bolsero Norteno
American Goldfinch	Mexico	Jilguero Canario

The source for this list is, DeGraff, Richard M. and John H. Rappole.
Neotropical Migratory Birds. Cornell University Press, NY. 1995.

The Stage is Set for Spring!

Lazuli Bunting



The lazuli bunting is named after the brilliant turquoise-blue gemstone known as lapis lazuli because of the similarly colored feathers that adorn the bird's head and back, complementing its rust colored chest.

The lazuli bunting is a common summer resident in Utah, breeding along streams within scrub oak lowlands and mid-elevation montane canyons. The males arrive in Utah from central Mexico around mid-May and begin establishing territories. Once the less brightly colored females arrive, the males sing persistently from conspicuous treetop perches. Females place their open-cup nests within dense tangles of vegetation about 4 feet above the ground. Pairs are monogamous and males help provide much of the insect food for the 3-4 growing chicks.

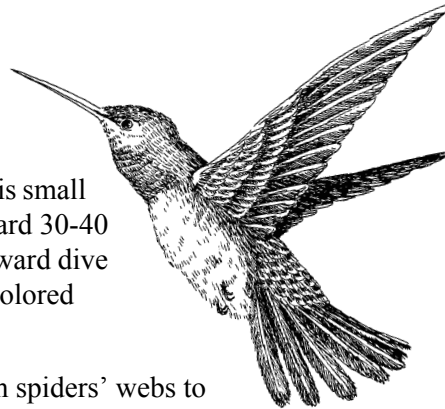
Declines have been noted in some populations of these birds including populations in Utah. Scientists think these declines may be a result of increased nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird

A common summer resident in Utah, the broad-tailed hummingbird inhabits open moist meadows and brushy thickets within coniferous forests, as well as gardens in towns. The male's iridescent magenta-rose gorget (throat patch) and green cap feathers, and the distinctive trilling sound made by the motion of the wings, make this small creature easy to spot. In his spectacular courtship display, the male first darts upward 30-40 feet into the air and then makes a looping u-shaped dive followed by another downward dive that stops instantly in front of the female where he hovers to show off his brightly colored gorget.

The female weaves various plant fibers, rootlets and mosses together with silk from spiders' webs to create a miniature cup-like nest on a horizontal twig. For camouflage, she decorates the nest with flakes of lichens, and then lays two small white eggs within it that will hatch about 17 days later.

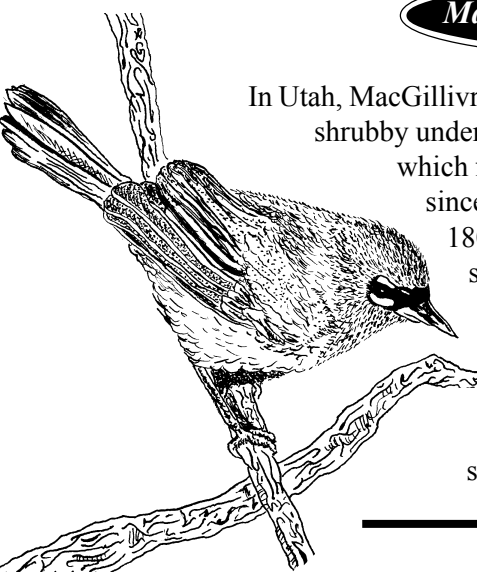
Hummingbirds commonly lap nectar with their long tongues from red, long-tubed flowers. In addition to nectar, broad-tailed hummingbirds feed on a variety of insects they zap out of the air and glean from leaves.



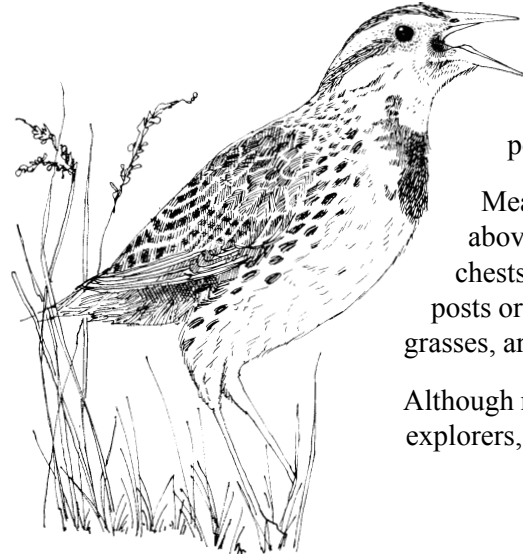
MacGillivray's Warbler

In Utah, MacGillivray's warbler commonly breeds in riparian habitats with dense thickets and shrubby undergrowth. This warbler is also common in the thick secondary growth areas which follow fire or logging, and there is evidence its breeding range has expanded since the early exploration and development of western North America in the 1800s. In its winter range in central Mexico, this species seems to prefer the same type of thick secondary growth habitat that it uses in the summer.

A small wood warbler, the male of this species is green above and yellow below. It has a dark gray hood accented by a partial eye ring. The eye ring is created by bold white crescents above and below each eye. Generally shy and elusive, the males become more conspicuous during courtship when they sing loudly from tree branches or shrubs.



Western Meadowlark



When you first hear a meadowlark sing, it usually means spring has arrived. Their flutelike melodious song can be heard for nearly a half a mile. The meadowlark is one of the most widely distributed and common birds in Utah and throughout the west. It makes its home in grasslands, open sagebrush shrublands and montane meadows up to 8,000 feet. Especially popular, the western meadowlark is the state bird of six different states!

Meadowlarks are relatively large, stout-bodied birds, and are related to blackbirds. Mottled brown above, they sport bright yellow feathers on their undersides, a distinctive v-shaped black collar on their chests and patches of white on each side of their tails. Males can often be seen singing from fence posts or flying up from the ground while defending their territories. Nests, made by females from coarse grasses, are hidden in thick patches of grass within a slight depression and domed with a protective canopy.

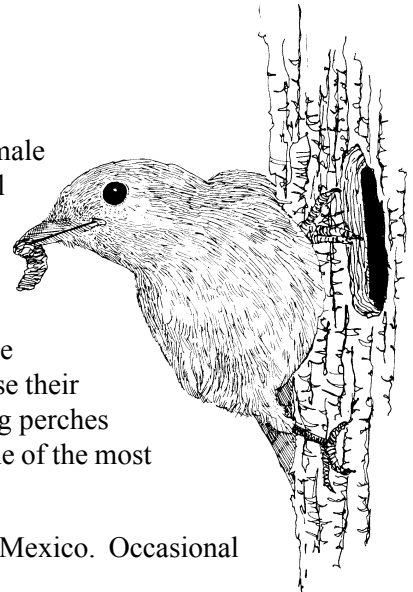
Although reported by Lewis and Clark, the western meadowlark was surprisingly overlooked by other explorers, a fact which inspired John James Audubon to give it its scientific name *neglecta*.

Mountain Bluebird

Henry David Thoreau once wrote, "the bluebird carries the sky on its back." The male is deep, bright sky blue above and paler below. The female is brownish-gray overall with a white belly. This charismatic member of the thrush family is a favorite of many people and it is the state bird of two Utah neighbors, Idaho and Nevada.

Mountain bluebirds prefer to nest near their foraging areas which are open woodlands and meadows of mountain valleys between 7,000 and 12,000 feet. These cavity nesters use old woodpecker holes, abandoned buildings and nest boxes to raise their young. Adult birds can often be seen sitting on fence posts which serve as scanning perches in wide-open country watching for insect prey. Although mountain bluebirds are one of the most insectivorous of all thrushes, they also eat berries and fruits.

Winter range for this bluebird stretches from southern British Columbia to northern Mexico. Occasional wintering birds are seen in the lower valleys of Utah, especially during severe cold.



Brown-headed Cowbird



Cowbirds are obligate brood parasites, which means they make no nest of their own, but lay their eggs (up to 40 in a season) in the nests of other birds. The unwitting host or "foster" parents are left to incubate and raise the larger and stronger cowbird chick at the expense of their own chicks, which often starve or are trampled to death.

The chocolate-colored hood of the male cowbird cloaks its glossy green-black body plumage, and is the source of its common name. The bird's scientific name also seems appropriate. *Molothrus* is derived from the Greek word for vagabond or tramp.

Cowbirds, earlier called "buffalo birds," evolved with herds of bison and adapted readily to cattle as bison were replaced. Grazing cattle flush insects and expose seeds that the short-legged cowbirds feed upon with their stout cone-shaped bills.

Brown-headed cowbirds are known to successfully parasitize more than 100 different host species, usually warblers, vireos, finches and flycatchers. Increased cattle grazing and clearing of forests throughout North America have allowed cowbirds to greatly expand their range, thereby stressing host songbird populations.

Resources

Many Happy Returns!

Come out and celebrate!

1997 Migratory Bird And Wetland Day - On May 10, celebrate the return of migratory birds to wetlands across the state. Naturalists will be at each site with information, posters, and spotting scopes. For a complete list of this year's sites call Project WILD at (801) 538-4719.

Request a free copy:

(801) 538-4719

International Migratory Bird Day Poster - You must see it to believe it! One of the most intriguing posters we have ever offered. This will be a favorite of your students.

Songbirds of Forest and Field Poster - A beautiful full-sized poster featuring bird paintings by famous artist and naturalist Louis Agassiz Fuertes.

Birds Beyond Borders Poster - A colorful poster depicting various neotropical migrants with both their American and Mexican names.

Peregrine Falcon Poster - You need one of these! Thanks to Kansas Project WILD, you can have this breathtaking color poster featuring one of Utah's most famous migrants.

Birds in Focus - An excellent student activity/information leaflet on spring migration produced by the Colorado Bird Observatory.

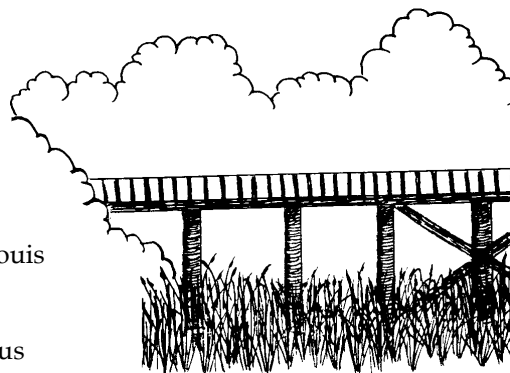
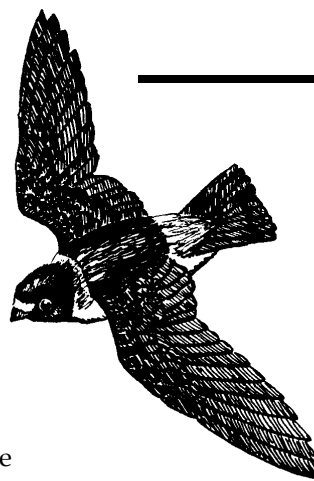
One For The Birds - One title in the North Carolina WILD Notebook series focusing on the plight of neotropical migratory birds.

Migratory Songbird Conservation - A comprehensive pamphlet produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service addressing ways to help migratory songbirds.

Field Checklist of the Birds of Utah - A listing of bird species, how common they are, and when they tend to be found in our state.

*Check-out the following from Project WILD;
call (801) 538-4719.*

Neotropical Migratory Songbird Resource File - includes the excellent activity guide and accompanying video "Wonders on the Wing," a video entitled "On a Wing and On a Prayer" which highlights the impacts of brown-headed cowbird nest parasitism, and a variety of articles, books and other information on neotropical migrants.



barn swallow

Songbird Blues Box



A trunk full of hands-on materials that students can use to explore migratory songbirds and the problems they face. Seven migratory bird species are featured in this kit which includes children's books, bird song audio tapes, videos, reference books and articles, posters, bird puppets, a felt story-board, K-12 activity guides and actual bird specimens! Too large to send, but available for checkout for up to a month. Call Project WILD today and reserve the Songbird Blues Box for your Utah animals unit! The box is on loan from the U.S. Forest Service.

Ask your students to close their eyes and imagine this scene as you read the passage below.

You have been flying in darkness for nearly six hours. Soon the sky will begin to glow in the east, tinging the horizon orange and pink. You weigh much less than you did at sunset, when you had eaten so much that you weighed $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as you do now. Luminous clouds sail the sky. A crescent moon flashes back at you from the still surface of a pond a mile below. An occasional call tells you the location of your companions scattered in the darkness.

You are a yellow warbler, named for the bright yellow plumage that colors you from beak to tail. Your black eyes miss nothing. The night is alive with many like yourself, flapping along at 35 miles per hour, moving north as you have every night since you left your Central American home for this yearly trip. You are headed for Utah, where you will gorge yourself on mayflies, caterpillars and beetle larvae.

You have no road map to guide you -- roads are of no help to you; yet you know from the rotation of the stars, the pull of the earth's magnetic field and the prevailing winds that you are going in the right direction, riding the warm wave that will bring spring to this reawakening land.

It hasn't been an easy journey. Remember last night in the fog when you barely missed hitting the TV station antenna?! And remember last week when you almost flew into the glass window of that skyscraper when you were landing in that park near the city?! Some of your companions weren't so lucky.

Each year more houses and larger cities twinkle up at you from the earth, reflecting a fragmentation of the land. The vast stretches of forest and prairie that your ancestors knew have been sliced into many small parcels. There are more edges -- fewer secluded interiors. It has gotten harder and harder to hide your nest from predators.

Before the new day dawns, you find yourself scanning the landscape for the dark patches that signify park, refuge, sanctuary. You will find safe trees and cover there where you will rest and feed during the daytime hours. And you will wait until darkness -- when you again continue your journey.

Questions for "Night Flight"

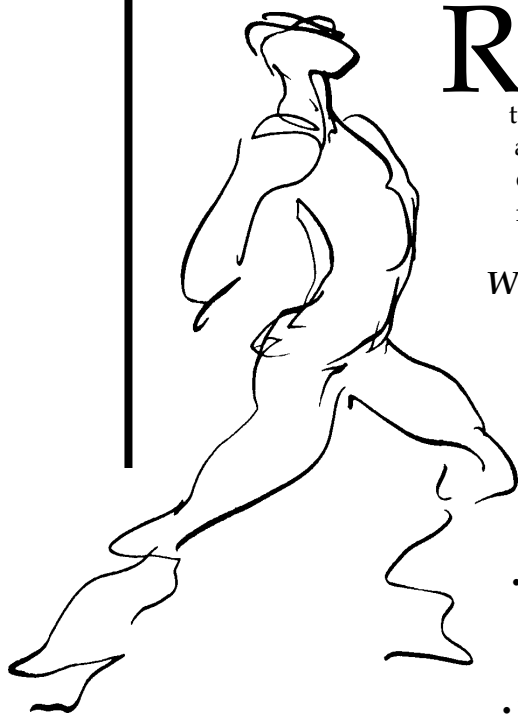
1. Why do birds migrate?
2. Why is it advantageous for some birds to migrate at night? How do they find their way?
3. Many birds also migrate during the day, like hawks and barn swallows. What clues might help them find their way?
4. What dangers have migrating birds always faced? Which dangers are newer?
5. Is there anything people can do to help migratory birds?

Extensions

- Using the warbler silhouette provided here, cut out a flock of birds from yellow paper. Tape them to the south end of a hallway or your classroom. (Label this end Central America.) Each morning, assign a different student to move them northward in small increments. Have their arrival at the north end of your classroom or hallway (labeled Utah) coincide with their arrival locally. Yellow warblers generally leave Central America in April and arrive in Utah in May, taking about 4 - 6 weeks for their journey.
- On black construction paper, using chalk, have students draw how the earth might appear from above to a bird migrating at night. Hang the artwork and discuss what sorts of places the "black" spaces might represent (i.e. parks, forest, lakes). Have students find local examples.

Advanced Wildlife Workshop

Dance and Project WILD



Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT) and Project WILD invite you to attend an innovative interdisciplinary workshop for teachers grades K-12. This unique opportunity for professional development will focus on ways to implement Utah's core curriculum in dance, science, social studies, math and language arts. Participants will discover ways to use movement to explore ecological concepts and deepen their understanding of the relationship between life and art.

Workshop Goals: RDT's Artistic Director, Linda Smith, and Project WILD Coordinator, Bob Ellis, will guide the participants through activities that will help teachers:

- Develop the skills necessary to achieve the state and national standards for dance.
- Gain a greater understanding of Utah's wildlife.
- Identify and demonstrate the movement elements and skills necessary in the performance of dance.
- Establish a deeper awareness of this place we call home.

Daily Schedule: June 16 - 20, Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Credit Options: • 3 credits University of Utah Division of Continuing Education (dance) \$50
• 3 credits Utah State University Elementary or Secondary Education graduate credit, \$30
• Utah State Office of Education inservice/recertification credit.

Fee: \$50. Workshop limited to 30 teachers. Make reservation by June 2. Call RDT at (801) 534-1000. Or send the form below to RDT, WIDE, PO Box 510427, SLC, UT 84151.

Everything: animals, trees, stars, we are all one substance involved in the same struggle. What struggle? ... Turning matter into spirit.

Zorba scratched his head and said, "I've got a thick skull boss. I don't grasp these things easily. Ah, if you could dance all that you've said, then I'd understand... or if you could tell me all that in a story boss."

-from Zorba the Greek-

Return form with \$50 check payable to RDT.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

School _____ Grade _____

If you have any questions, call Linda Smith at (801) 534-1000.

Advanced Wildlife Workshop

Great Basin Wetland Ecosystem Weekend

Project WILD invites you to come and explore Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, a unique wetland ecosystem in the Great Basin Desert. Located on the historic Pony Express Trail, Fish Springs serves as a critical resting and nesting site for thousands of migratory birds. This is a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes of a National Wildlife Refuge and to learn from biologists while helping them collect data.

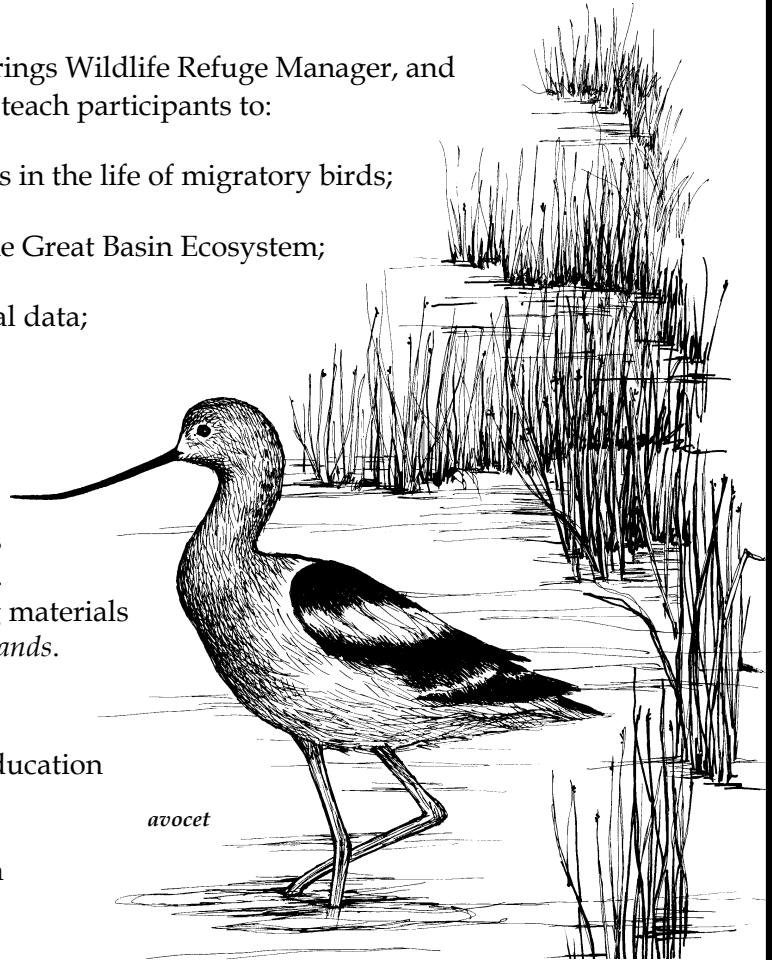
Workshop Goals: Jay Banta, Fish Springs Wildlife Refuge Manager, and Utah Wildlife Resources biologists will teach participants to:

- Appreciate the importance of wetlands in the life of migratory birds;
- Develop a deeper understanding of the Great Basin Ecosystem;
- Learn to collect and interpret biological data;
- Understand wetland management.

Daily Schedule: Arrive **July 11**, at 5:00 pm. Depart **July 13**, at 12:00 noon. Housing is available. Campsites are also available. All food is provided. Participants receive numerous teaching materials including a copy of *The Wonders of Wetlands*.

Credit Options: • 2 hours Utah State University Elementary or Secondary Education graduate credit, \$20

• 2 hours Utah State Office of Education inservice/recertification credit.



Return form with \$30 check payable to UDWR.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

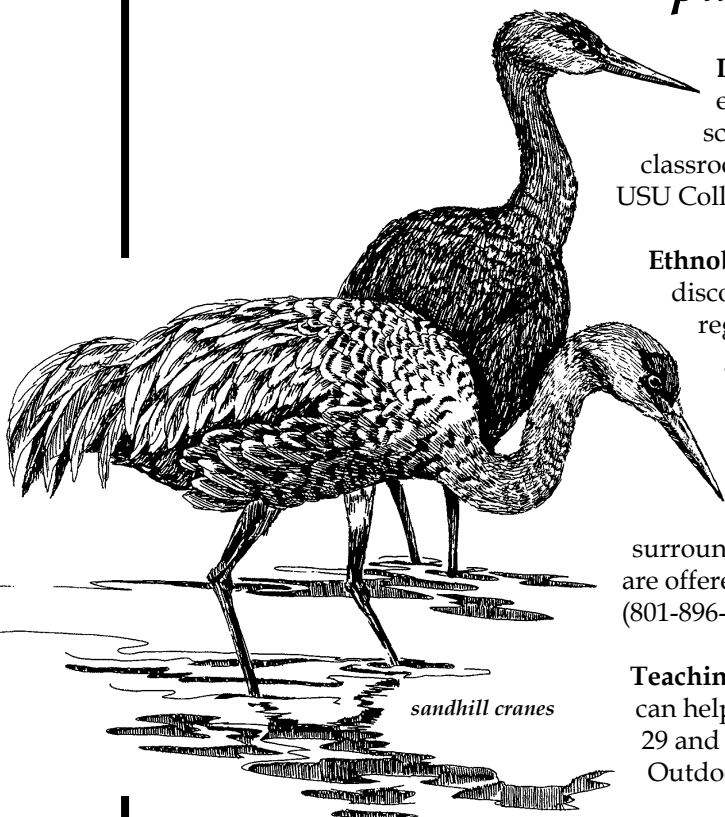
School _____ Grade _____

_____ I need transportation from Salt Lake City.

If you have any questions, call Bob Ellis at (801) 538-4720.

Summer Studies

Don't fly by the seat of your pants; Take a class this summer!



sandhill cranes

Logan Canyon Teacher's Workshop - integrate environmental education themes and topics into the school curriculum, using the school grounds to enhance classroom teaching. August 4 - 6. Contact Dr. Sharon Ohlhurst, USU College of Natural Resources (801-797-2580).

Ethnobotany of the Escalante - explore the Escalante region, discovering how earlier cultures used the ecosystems of this region for food, construction materials and medicines. June 19-21. Contact Kara Edwards, Utah Museum of Natural History (801-581-4887).

Central Utah Outdoor Education Workshop - experience a variety of activities designed to help students understand and respect their natural surroundings. Project WILD or Project Learning Tree workshops are offered. July 28 - August 1, Ephraim, UT. Contact Bill Wood (801-896-6411).

Teaching Environmental Ethics - learn teaching strategies that can help students form their own environmental ethic. June 22-29 and July 27-August 3. Contact the Four Corners School of Outdoor Education, Monticello, UT 84535 (800-525-4456).

Teton Science School: Keepers of the Earth - discover how to use Native American stories and associated activities (from the Michael J. Caudato and Joseph Bruchac *Keepers* series) to help give meaning to environmental studies in the classroom. June 23-24. Credit available. Contact the Teton Science School, P.O. Box 68, Kelly, WY 83011 (307-733-4765).

Raptors and the West - a symposium on raptor migration, biology and conservation. June 12-15. Snowbird, UT. Sponsored by HawkWatch International. Call (800-726-4295).

Heartland Peaks Outdoor Education Workshop - a process-oriented workshop emphasizing the use of environmental education in cooperative learning and in mainstreaming special groups of students. July 23-28, McCall, ID. Contact Dr. Richard McCloskey (800-632-6586 ext. 3490).

Nature and the Arts - focuses on integrating wildlife and habitat studies with music, poetry, literature, nature journaling and drama. June 9-14, Sierra Vista, AZ. Contact Fred or Karen Stahl (520-458-5502).

Even More!

Canyonlands Field Institute, Moab, UT (800-860-5262).

The Yellowstone Institute, Yellowstone Park, WY (307-344-2294).

Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Estes Park, CO (970-586-1258).

National Audubon Camp of the West, Wind River Mountains, WY (203-869-2017).

National Wildlife Federation Conservation Summits and NatureQuest (800-245-5484).

Resources

Free for the Pickin's!

Free! Call Project WILD at:
(801) 538-4719

As the Arrow Turns - informative brochure discussing the future life of various recycled materials.

Legislative Roster - updated listing of names, addresses and phone numbers of Utah's legislators.

Working With People for Healthy Land and Wildlife! - black-and-white poster featuring a simple forest scene that younger students can color.

Alaska's Cold Desert - an excellent article, set of activities and poster highlighting this fascinating region of our nation.

Nature's Web: Communities & Conservation - National Wildlife Week packet for 1997.

Wildlife Internet Sites:

Kids F.A.C.E. Animal Tracks at <http://www.wal-mart.com/community/environment.animal.html> is a fun interactive site for kids to explore conservation issues and how they can make a difference. The site changes monthly.

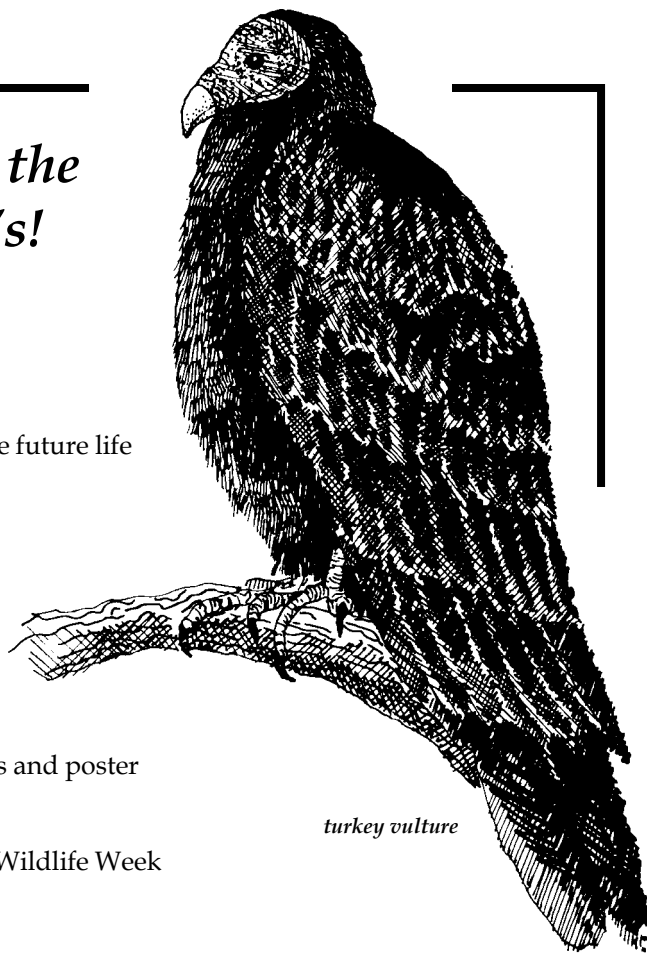
Caribbean Conservation at <http://www.ccturtle.org/> is a sea turtle education and information site that includes an interactive sea turtle migration tracking activity and teacher's guide.

The Bear Den at <http://www.nature-net.com/bears/> provides information about different bear species, along with a photo gallery, plus the "Cub Den" a fun link for young readers.

California condor reintroduction updates are given at <http://www.peregrinefund.org>.

The Salmon Page at <http://www.riverdale.k12.or.us/salmon.htm> is the place to learn everything you always wanted to know about salmon. Check out the salmon conservation link, Save Our Wild Salmon at <http://www.desktop.org.sos>.

Whales: A Thematic Unit at <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/Whales/> has lesson plans for teachers, students activities and links like The Whale Information Network at <http://webmedia.com.au/whales/whales6.html>.



turkey vulture




Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura

Spring soars into Utah on the wings of the turkey vulture. This common Utah summer resident's breeding range stretches from British Columbia to South America. Turkey vultures do not build nests, but lay their eggs on rocky ledges and outcrops. Both sexes incubate the eggs.

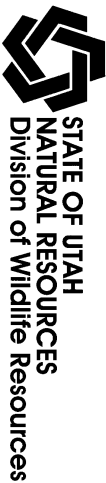
Since turkey vultures feed primarily on carrion, much research has focused on the ability of these birds to locate food by smell. Most biologists now agree that this vulture uses both sight and smell to locate its food. Turkey vultures live up to their genus name *Cathartes* (which comes from the Latin word *kathartes*, meaning purifier) by transforming the putrefying dead into beautiful and mesmerizing flight.

Project WILD



Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
1594 West North Temple, Suite 2110
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Growing WILD is written by Bob Ellis and Diana Vos. Robert Hilberd drew the brown-headed cowbird, lazuli bunting and MacGillivray's warbler. Doug Moore drew the snowy plover and barn swallow. Jill Kensel drew the avocet. Ellen Petrick-Underwood wrote the activity, *Night Flight*.



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